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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000272

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SUBJECT: JUNE 19 NRC AMBASSADORIAL: MINISTERIAL PREP,
DISAGREEMENT OVER GEORGIA

Classified By: Charge John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY: On June 19, NATO-Russia Council Ambassadors prepared for the June 27 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Ministerial in Corfu. They focused on three possible deliverables: a "way forward" paper for the NRC; a political mandate to restart military-to-military cooperation; and, Russian participation in NATO's Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean Sea. Nations were hopeful that the paper could be agreed, but signaled that they would not sacrifice the quality of the paper just for the sake of getting it ready for the ministerial. Russia thanked NATO for the invitation to participate in Active Endeavor, noting the invitation had been sent to Moscow for decision. Allies were united in voicing regret over the Russian veto of the renewal of the mandate for the UN Observer Mission in Georgia. NRC Ambassadors agreed they would meet again on July 22. In a separate meeting with Ambassador Daalder, Russian PermRep Rogozin was cautious about whether the "way forward paper" could be approved before the Ministerial, but expressed hope that at least some elements of it would be agreed. He also advocated, without specifics, a NATO-Russia Union as the next step for the NRC. END SUMMARY

Focus on Ministerial Deliverables

12. (C/NF) At their June 19 meeting, NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Ambassadors focused on preparations for the June 27 NATO-Russia Council Ministerial in Corfu. NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer said the meeting would send a high-level signal of NATO-Russian reengagement. At the same time, he hoped that there would be several concrete deliverables from the meeting:

-- a paper currently being negotiated in the NRC Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) on practical steps to move the NRC forward;

-- a decision to restart military-to-military cooperation; and

-- a positive answer from Russia to NATO's invitation to contribute a vessel to NATO's modest Article 5 counterterrorist operation in the Mediterranean, Operation Active Endeavor (OAE).

¶3. (C/NF) NRC Ambassadors supported this list of deliverables, but several stressed that work on the PrepCom paper should not be rushed just for the sake of achieving a deliverable at the ministerial. Norway, for example, said that the ultimate quality of the finished paper was more important than its timing. The Bulgarian PermRep said simply that he was not prepared to "die in a ditch" in order to get the paper done by Corfu. Russian Ambassador Rogozin said that Moscow was interested in finalizing the paper, but added that "June 27 is not Lenin's birthday so we don't have to rush." He said that he did not understand why NATO Allies had problems with some of the Russian proposals for the paper, particularly language on the indivisibility of security. This prompted Poland to note that nations should avoid "selective quoting" of NRC principles. Rogozin expressed his belief that the final agreed document should be made public.

¶4. (C/NF) Rogozin expressed gratitude for the invitation to participate in OAE, adding that it had been forwarded to Moscow for decision.

Allies United on Termination of UNOMIG

¶5. (C/NF) German PermRep Brandenburg expressed extreme disappointment at the Russian decision to veto the renewal of the mandate for the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

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Brandenburg said that he would be surprised if this was not an issue for discussion in Corfu. Allies who spoke, including the U.S., agreed. Slovenia, for example, said the Russian veto was "deplorable." In response, Ambassador Rogozin stated that Russia was "very unhappy" about having to veto UNOMIG, but argued that it was forced to do so. He said UNOMIG's mission had been completed. Rogozin then went on to compare the situation in Georgia to Parisians' initial reaction to the construction of the Eiffel Tower, noting that initially Parisians disapproved of the Tower's construction but now regard the Tower as an iconic symbol of Paris. The Danish Ambassador said Rogozin's analogy was "absurd."

July Ambassadorial

¶6. (C/NF) NRC nations agreed that the next Ambassadorial meeting would be on July 22nd. Rogozin recommended using the meeting to discuss Afghanistan in a regional context or to receive a briefing on Russia's new national security strategy. Germany said it would appreciate a briefing on the Russian national security strategy. The Secretary General said that the PrepCom could begin work on the meeting's agenda.

Ambassador Daalder's Meeting with Rogozin

¶7. (C/NF) In a separate July 18 meeting with Rogozin, Ambassador Daalder emphasized U.S. commitment to the success of the Corfu Ministerial. Daalder viewed the "way forward" paper as the key Ministerial deliverable, hopefully making the NRC into more than a talk shop. He urged agreement on creating an NRC structure that would advance cooperation on missile defense cooperation, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, non-proliferation, and Afghanistan. Daalder stressed the importance of NATO-Russia relations to complement our bilateral relations. Rogozin initially demonstrated uncertainty over whether or not the paper could be agreed on before the Ministerial, but later suggested that the paper could be approved under a silence procedure before the Ministerial. Despite these somewhat conflicting

messages, Rogozin said that agreement should--at the very least--be reached on a decision to restart mil-to-mil cooperation. He also anticipated progress in the sections of the paper dealing with NRC streamlining.

18. (C/NF) Rogozin strongly implied his ability to deliver results, emphasizing his personal relationships with Russian Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev. Rogozin said that the Russian leadership wanted to be involved in security discussions and projects at NATO. He said the NRC should be taken to the next step: a NATO-Russia Union.

HEFFERN